

For The Children

For Presbyterian of the South.

KATIE OSBORNE'S EFFORTS.

By Esther Brooks.

Katie sat in a big chair before the cheerful open fire. She looked at the glowing coals and bright, laughing flames, and thought, and thought, and thought. By and by a plan began to form in her wise little head. Was she not thirteen years old, and had she not taken the prize for penmanship at school that year? "Yes, I will do it. I will do that very thing," she said to herself. "I will go to see Judge Seay in the morning."

Katie's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Osborne, lived on a farm half a mile from a little town; and they were very poor. Mr. Osborne worked hard, but made little money, and his wife had been sick for several months. From where Katie sat now she could see the brave little woman lying upon her back patiently darning a rent in baby's dress.

When good Dr. Riley left yesterday Katie heard him tell her father that the mother must have something to tempt her appetite, to make her grow strong again. Ever since Katie had wondered how they could get the money to buy these things. It took all of her father's money to pay the rent and buy shoes and dresses for the little ones and plain food for the table. Very little was ever spared for dainties, even at Christmas or Thanksgiving. But now her mother must have daintier and more nutritious food—food that she could eat.

So, as Katie looked into the fire and thought, this afternoon, she decided that she would ask Judge Seay, who was superintendent of the village Sunday school, and a good, kind man, if there was not some copying in his law office that she could do.

Having settled this in her mind her heart felt lighter, and she turned to her mother, saying cheerily, "Feel better, mother? Let me turn your pillow, I know you must be tired. There! Isn't that nicer?"

"Yes, dear; thank you," said the mother, as she stroked her hand.

Just then the little ones came noisily in from school. They were hungry, after their lessons and their walk in the cool, crisp air; so Katie hurried away to quiet them and give them something to eat.

At last, when a quiet moment came and they were alone, Katie told her plans very secretly to Walter, a brother two years younger than herself, making him promise, upon his word and honor, that he would never breathe it to a soul.

That night Katie could scarcely sleep for thinking what she should say to Judge Seay, what he would say to her, what she would do if he hadn't any work for her, and what she would do if he did.

The next morning she was up with the sun, and as soon as she could get off, was on her way to the Judge's office in the village.

The air was pleasant, and the sun shone bright and warm; but as Katie went up the steps and rang the

office bell she forgot all about this, and was only conscious of a choking in her throat and of a stifling thump, thump, thump, within her chest.

Finally, after what seemed to her a long, long time, a maid came to the door and invited her in. After another long wait, as it seemed to Katie, Judge Seay came in. He looked at her over the tops of his spectacles with wide-open eyes.

Instead of the big man he had expected to see, here was a slender, shrinking girl.

Katie's heart thumped so hard that she wondered if the Judge could hear it.

"Well, good morning, Miss Katie," he said, kindly. "What can I do for you today?"

Her throat was dry, and it seemed as if her lips would not open. But after a little she said timidly: "I thought, sir, perhaps you had some copying that you wanted done. My teacher said I could write very well, and I thought maybe I could do it for you. Mother's ill and the doctor says we must get her some things we haven't got." Her cheeks reddened and her voice trembled.

"Well," said the Judge, motioning to the desk, "there are paper and pen. Write this for me: 'He that can have patience can have what he will.' 'Diligence is the mother of success.'"

"Here it is, sir," said Katie, as she handed him the sentences neatly written on the clean, white sheet.

"All right," said the Judge. "I have some copying to be done, and I think you can do it. Can you spare two hours each day? Well, if you will write here from two until four every day I will give you three dollars a week."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" said Katie, as her eyes filled with tears. "Shall I begin tomorrow?"

"Yes; and to make sure of you, I am going to pay you now a dollar in advance," the Judge said, and smiled.

Katie took the money in her little trembling hand, and when she got out into the village street again it seemed to her that the sun had never shone so brightly or the birds sung so sweetly in all her life before.

What should the dollar buy for the little mother? She walked past the stores and then came back again, still uncertain how to spend it. The candy and the peanuts looked so good, but she knew her mother couldn't eat those. Then she saw some nice, big, yellow oranges. She must have some of those for her mother, she said to herself. Then she remembered having once seen a trained nurse prepare an orange, scraped beef, rice and toast for a sick lady. "That is it," she said, as her eyes sparkled. "I will get a nice loaf of bread, a piece of butter, some rice and steak for dear mother." After she had paid for these things she had fifteen cents left. With her packages in her arms she walked joyously home, feeling as if she were treading on air. She slipped quietly into the kitchen and put the things on the clean table. Then she went to take a glass of cool, fresh water to her mother.

"Oh, Katie," she said, "I am so glad you've come! I am so tired, and I want a cup of nice, hot tea, if you please, dear."

"All right, mother," Katie said, cheerily.